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26 Photos · April 9, 2022 · 1:20 AM GMT+3

Ukrainian villagers count dead after weeks confined in school basement

The names of the dead are scrawled on the peeling wall of a school basement where residents say more than 300 people were trapped weeks by Russian occupiers in Yahidne, a village north of the Ukrainian capital Kyiv.

[1/26] Residents of Yahidne are seen inside the basement of a school, a day after Russian troops left, in the village of Yahidne, near Chernihiv, Ukraine, March 31. Residents continued to sleep in the basement of the school as their houses had been destroyed. Olha Meniaylo/Handout via REUTERS

YAHIDNE, UKRAINE

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[2/26] Ivan Balanovych stands inside the basement of a school, as Russia's invasion of Ukraine continues, in the village of Yahidne, near to Chernihiv, Ukraine, April 6. REUTERS/Marko Djurica

YAHIDNE, UKRAINE

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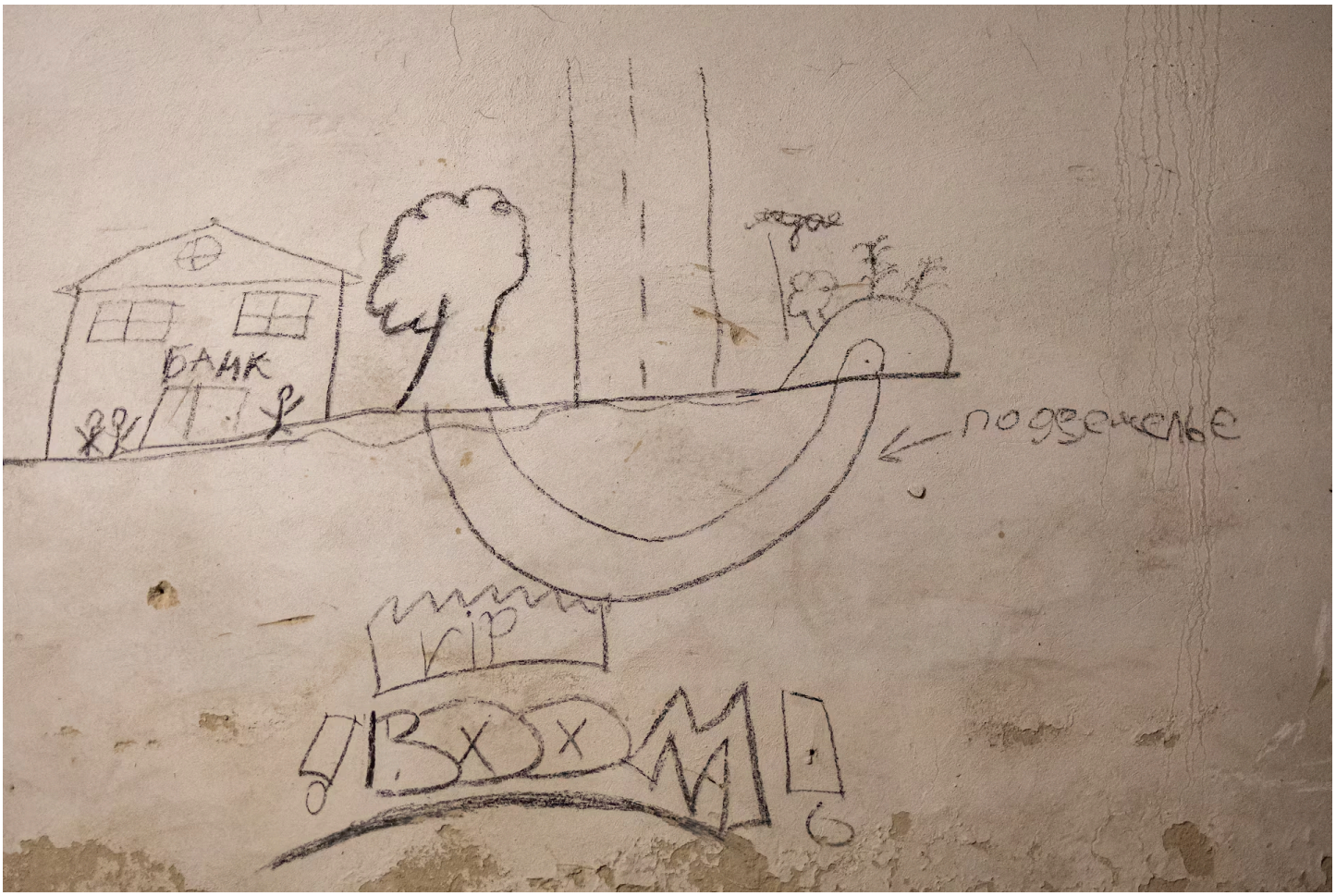

[3/26] A drawing is seen on a wall inside the basement of a school, with the words "Underground, bank and boom" in the village of Yahidne, near to Chernihiv, Ukraine, April 6. Reuters spoke to seven residents of Yahidne who said that, in total, at least 20 people died or were killed during the Russian occupation. No official death toll has been released by Ukrainian authorities. REUTERS/Marko Djurica

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[4/26] Tamara Klymchuk, 64, and her dog stand next to the grave of a local man in the village of Yahidne, near to Chernihiv, Ukraine, April 6, 2022. "We had a very good life," said Klymchuk, whose son-in-law was 50-year-old Viktor Shevchenko, one of the two brothers that villagers say were killed by Russian soldiers. "We never thought such grief would come upon us." REUTERS/Marko Djurica

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[5/26] Petro Hlystun, 71, gestures, in front of destroyed houses, as Russia's invasion of Ukraine continues, in the village of Yahidne, near Chernihiv, Ukraine, April 6. REUTERS/Marko Djurica

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[6/26] Improvised beds are seen inside the basement of a school, as Russia's invasion of Ukraine continues, in the village of Yahidne, near Chernihiv, Ukraine, April 6. REUTERS/Marko Djurica

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[7/26] Serhii Bondarenko sits inside a room in the basement of a school, as Russia's invasion of Ukraine continues, in the village of Yahidne, near Chernihiv, Ukraine, April 6. REUTERS/Marko Djurica SEARCH

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[8/26] A destroyed building is seen, as Russia's invasion of Ukraine continues, in the village of Yahidne, near Chernihiv, Ukraine, April 6. REUTERS/Marko Djurica

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[9/26] Vitalii Udod, a volunteer from Kyiv, stands next to a van loaded with two dead bodies in the village of Yahidne, near to Chernihiv, Ukraine, April 6. Reuters was not able to verify independently the villagers' accounts. Reporters saw one freshly dug grave in a field by the village and two bodies wrapped in white plastic sheets.
REUTERS/Marko Djurica

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[10/26] Ukrainian servicemen check a damaged Russian military vehicle, as Russia's invasion of Ukraine continues, in the village of Yahidne, near to Chernihiv, Ukraine, April 6. REUTERS/Marko Djurica

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[11/26] Tamara Klymchuk, 64, pushes a cart with her belongings through the Yahidne village, near Chernihiv, Ukraine, April 6. The accounts of what happened in the village add to growing testimony from Ukrainian civilians of suffering in the towns around Kyiv during the weeks of occupation by Russian forces following the invasion launched on Feb. 24. REUTERS/Marko Djurica

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[12/26] People stand in front of a damaged school, as Russia's invasion of Ukraine continues, in the village of Yahidne, near to Chernihiv, Ukraine, April 6. REUTERS/Marko Djurica

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[13/26] Ivan Balanovych (L) smokes a cigarette with his friends in front of a damaged school in the village of Yahidne, near to Chernihiv, Ukraine, April 6. The last victim recorded on the walls of the basement, Nadiya Budchenko, died on March 28, two days before Russian troops withdrew from the village when their drive toward the Ukrainian capital stalled. REUTERS/Marko Djurica

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[14/26] Oleksandra Potii reacts as she sits in front of a damaged schoo in the village of Yahidne, near to Chernihiv, Ukraine, April 6. REUTERS/Marko Djurica

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[15/26] Halyna Tolochina writes on a wall inside the basement of a school as Tamara Klymchuk, 64, watches in the village of Yahidne, near Chernihiv, Ukraine, April 6. "This one was buried in the yard," Tolochina said, pointing to the name Shevchenko V. "And this one, they said he is there (buried in the village), somewhere," she said, pointing to the name Shevchenko T, whose body has not been... **Read more**

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[16/26] Ivan Balanovych sits inside the basement of a school in the village of Yahidne, near Chernihiv, Ukraine, April 6. Reuters interviewed six other residents, who corroborated Tolochina's account and described being held in the bare concrete rooms of the basement, with around 60 children, little food or water, no electricity and no toilets. REUTERS/Marko Djurica

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[17/26] Halyna Tolochina sits inside the basement of a school, as Russia's invasion of Ukraine continues, in the village of Yahidne, near Chernihiv, Ukraine, April 6. REUTERS/Marko Djurica

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[18/26] Chairs and tables are seen inside the basement of a school in the village of Yahidne, near Chernihiv, Ukraine, April 6. REUTERS/Marko Djurica

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[19/26] A drawing is seen on a wall inside the basement of a school in the village of Yahidne, April 6. Ukrainian authorities have accused Russia of war crimes, following the unearthing of mass graves in towns around Kyiv, such as Bucha and Motyzhyn, and the discovery of bodies whose hands had been tied and shot in the head.
REUTERS/Marko Djurica

YAHIDNE, UKRAINE

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[20/26] Halyna Tolochina stands in front of a wall inscribed with the names of people who died inside a school basement in the village of Yahidne, near Chernihiv, Ukraine, April 6, 2022. Tolochina, a member of the village council, struggled to compose herself as she went through the list, scribbled in black on the plaster either side of a green door, in the gloomy warren where she said she and hundreds... **Read more**

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